

THE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Despite the publication some six years ago of a progress report on the National Bibliography (*New Zealand Libraries* 22:101-5 Jul 1959) there are reasons why an up-to-date outline should be given now—among them the completion, last June, of the *Checklist*, current plans for commencing printing and the decision to include as part of the series (and the whole work will be in a series of volumes) the pre-1890 period.

Although the thought that such a bibliography should be compiled ante-dated my arrival on the library scene—see for example the 1936 article in *Tomorrow*—the need early became a challenge if not an ultimate goal. The initial report (N.Z.L.A. Document 1948/42) on the proposal was formally received at a meeting of the Book Resources Committee in September, 1948. It is fair to say that the Secretary of the Committee and compiler was only a degree or two less ignorant of what such a project involved than most of the members. At this point of time the standard work, Dr T. M. Hocken's *Bibliography of the Literature relating to New Zealand*, was nearly forty years behind us, A. H. Johnstone's *Supplement to Hocken's Bibliography*. . . was 21 years old. They were by then out of print although my purchase some years earlier of both together in a bundle at Bethune's for the then considerable sum of 25s. could be taken as an earnest of bibliographical good intention. Chapple's second supplement, *A bibliographical brochure*. . . had been published in 1938 and, so far as I recall, was still available.

It is a somewhat ironic understatement to say that during the ensuing seventeen years a great deal happened, little of which was conducive to orderly and systematic work on a bibliography. The initial decision to start compilation was anticipated by the active help of Miss M. P. Parsons as Director of the Library School in encouraging Library School students of the 1946 class to undertake sectional work as part of their bibliographical projects, which pattern was followed intermittently for the next decade. The initial burst of activity from 1948 to 1950, greatly aided by the energy and enthusiasm of Mr. A. L. Olsson, was unfortunately followed by a period

Mr Bagnall is Librarian, National Library Centre.

of quiescence during which the first published edition of the *Union List of Serials*. . . became the priority. With the publication of the *Union List* and later the establishment of the Bibliographical Section, greatly increased time and effort during the past decade have been put into the project although only during 1964 has any permanent member of staff been able to work full time on it.

Our conception of its scope and range has also changed. At first it was thought that the bibliography should cover the whole period from the first printed reference down to 1950. Fortunately this hope was quickly seen to be too ambitious and the years from 1900 were given priority with emphasis on the gap between the end of Hocken and the commencement of the *Copyright Publications*. Then, as the number of omissions from Hocken became more evident and because both historically and culturally 1890 seemed a more logical dividing year than 1900, the decision to back-date the bibliography was taken. Meanwhile 1950 passed and as the years slipped by it seemed logical to include in the main work the cumulation of the decade of *Current National Bibliography*; hence the span 1890-1960. Finally, with the *Checklist* behind, it was possible to return with more confidence and justification to the original concept of a work which would cover the entire span from 1674 onwards.

Printing of the *Checklist* which has been circulated to some fifteen New Zealand libraries commenced in March 1961 and was completed in June 1964. It should be noted at this point that the printing was limited in size and no further sets are available for distribution. The entries which it contained were based mainly on the holdings of the National Library Service, Alexander Turnbull Library and General Assembly Library with the holdings of other libraries, notably Hocken, the Auckland Institute and Museum and Auckland Public Library, located through the National Union Catalogue and on the spot checking. I am glad to express once again my gratitude to the librarians of the many libraries who were able to arrange for the checking of the lists as they were issued; and also the very considerable assistance which many rendered by sending up material for examination with only the safeguard of registered post. I should record here also my appreciation of the facilities for checking given to me in the Wellington libraries mentioned and the help by colleagues in pointing out omissions. From all sources the *Checklist* included about 23,000 entries to which over 2,000 have been added since. When it is recalled that there are 3,500 titles in Hocken some indication of the relative size of the two works may be obtained. It appears probable that another 3,500 titles will be added for the period down to 1889.

Within its defined scope the bibliography aspires to completeness but this is a goal, a standard, something to aim at which in the nature of loss and survival can only be approached after years of trial and labour. The fact that even at this stage unrecorded items are still being found in quantity in library acquisitions, at auction

sales and elsewhere is an indication of what has been missed by libraries in the past as well as a warning that the final bibliography will certainly not contain everything. Even so, the amount of pamphlet material included is probably greater than will be found in most overseas bibliographies of a comparable kind for the same period. While known private holdings have been used to a limited extent one is clearly restricted in the main to library holdings. For example, a marginal category, company prospectuses, should be held completely in the archives of the Company's Office. The material should be there for the persistent researcher following known clues. But a great many prospectuses are held in libraries—all should be nationally—and apart from their economic or commercial interest are frequently of local significance. Prospectuses for the Chateau Tongariro, Perpetual Forests or the numerous hopeful Kerikeri fruitlands prospects, with their illustrations and text, are key documents for the areas concerned. The late decision, too, to include the constitutions and rules of societies and associations will mean that a great many will escape the net. As a group they are of the greatest significance in their respective subjects. The rules of the Parnell Book Club for 1885, for example, which I found buried in a manuscript in the Turnbull Library, reflect graphically the attitudes and standards of the private subscription library of the time. But both these categories would be excluded from most overseas national bibliographies as well as other classes which have been brought in. In a more obvious context it is disappointing to report that, despite the *Checklist*, far too many unlocated items and editions with double asterisks are still required.

The wisdom of compiling a *Checklist* has been clearly demonstrated not merely for its obvious purpose but as the foundation for further checking of bibliographical details. From some points of view it is really the "start-point" from which the bibliography is compiled. Editorial problems are numerous, many are still unsuspected, and those which have been encountered could take a small book in their illustration. Problems of authorship, and variant editions in themselves are the fascinating compensations for a great deal of inevitable drudgery in routine checking and recording. The whys and wherefores of the various editions of the *Imperial Album of New Zealand Scenery*, Dinwiddie's *Old Hawke's Bay* and Tregear's *A Premier's Voyage to the South Sea Islands in Search of Health* are stories which bibliographical method alone cannot entirely resolve. Publishers' records in New Zealand, alas, notably those of the Government Printer, seem to have gone the way of much of their kind elsewhere.

Additions to the *Checklist* will periodically be photoprinted and distributed to enable them to be interfiled with the master sequence. Clearly the proliferation of alphabets will be somewhat frustrating but the list is intended only as an interim working record. The many amendments, expansions and revisions of existing entries which are being made all the time will appear in the final printed form only.

Entries which are located after the appropriate alphabetical sequence has gone to the printer will be cumulated in a supplementary sequence in the final volume.

Responsibility for publication has been accepted by the Government Printer and discussions on format, type face and associated problems are currently in progress. It is clear that the work as a whole with the pre-1890 entries and the subject and added entry sequence will be in several volumes which will be issued over a period of years but to be completed, I may be permitted to hope, before my retirement. The entries themselves will be in alphabetical order of author, each entry being given finally a number for that sequence of the alphabet. Transcription broadly follows the principles laid down in the 1941 *A.L.A. Rules* with detailed collation and annotations where necessary. Individual works under personal author entries will be in order of publication of the first edition which will give a conspectus of the development of a writer's work. The transcription of the title-page for the period 1890-1960 follows broadly the provisions of the 1941 *A.L.A. Rules* except that in revision of entries, author statements which throw light on the writer's interest in or knowledge of the subject matter are being included. Omissions in any case, except in the imprint, are indicated by ellipsis.

Problems of main entry are persistent and harassing as they must be in any alphabetical bibliography of 25,000 entries. Two major decisions have determined in part the character of this aspect. The first, happily substantiated by the latest draft of the *Code of Cataloging Rules* (1963, 1:36), is that whenever possible, entry shall be under personal author rather than corporate entry. The second principle—a departure from the 1941 rules but consistent with the new code—is that in the case of corporate entry the favoured form of the name is that under which the body was known at the time the work was published. The exception to the new rule whereby corporate bodies are entered under their names rather than in the case of institutions under the place, providing that churches, schools, libraries, galleries, etc. will be entered under the city or in certain cases under the country, is, again, followed in the bibliography. In every possible case references will be given, and it was a fault in the *Checklist* that comparatively few had been inserted at that stage. One of the major tasks of editorial revision completed by Mrs F. A. Dienes in 1964 was to check entries against likely alternatives and to provide the necessary references. This has eliminated a number of duplicate entries and brought about a general schematic tightening up of the bibliography. These, like other amendments and revisions, will appear only in the final work. It may be said that the wide range of alternative entries used by libraries for the same work is a sobering commentary on the cataloguing art and the rules which support it.

A question still awaiting resolution is that of subject entries. During most of the time of compilation, at least until the commencement of the *Checklist*, subject entries were made concurrently with

the main entry. It has become increasingly clear, however, that many of the geographical headings used are inadequate, while many of the books will justify analytics. These entries with the added entries first appearing in the alphabetical sequence will be included in the index volume.

The decision to include the pre-1890 section seems a sensible one in the interest of completeness. More recently there have been proposals for the reprinting of Hocken in facsimile. Such an edition would find an immediate but limited demand but would leave unresolved the considerable number of items not in the parent work even down to 1889. The later sequence and the Maori section would alike be redundant. After much consideration it has been decided that the transcription of the title-page for this section should be lined off in the normal way. Arrangement will, however, be alphabetical in conformity with the rest of the bibliography. The scope of this section has still to be finally determined. There are good grounds for extending the 1890-1960 rules to include such material as broadsides, periodical articles to a specified date and other marginal material which has been omitted in the later section.

Although it is not planned to publish this volume until later in the programme some preliminary work has already been done. Thanks to the labours of Dr Hocken and his immediate successors the initial task of preparing a working *Checklist* is simple in comparison with the more recent period. The relevant pages of Hocken are being photocopied, from the positives of which individual entries will be mounted on slips for interfiling and checking with supplementary typed entries. As far as possible Hocken's annotations will be reprinted in quotes with amplification or amendment only where essential.

Much thought has been given to the problem of including holdings in the bibliography. For the 1890-1960 section it has been decided that it is not possible or necessary in most cases to include these with the main entries. The reasons for this decision are complex but stem in part from the fact that not all New Zealand collections are yet fully included in the Union Catalogue, entries in the Union Catalogue itself have still to be reconciled with the entries adopted for the Bibliography—a formidable task—and finally these factors would not have been an insuperable difficulty had library holdings been sought when the *Checklist* was issued. Locations for items of known rarity can be given in the index volume using the entry number as a code. It is, however, intended that locations will be given with entries for the pre-1890 titles which will be shown in its appropriate *Checklist*.

It is hoped that the final work will provide an adequate approach to the more significant of our publications and that the comparatively simple task of producing decennial supplements from 1971 on will become a normal and proper responsibility of the National Library.